

STATE'S BIG MILK CONCERNS, LED BY BORDEN'S, PREPARING FOR "LEGALIZED MONOPOLY"

Evidence of This Made Apparent at Fair Price Committee Hearing.

LIGHT ON BYPRODUCTS

Sophie Irene Loeb Brings Admission From Borden's Vice President.

Albert T. Johnston, Vice President of the Borden Company, which six weeks ago took that name instead of the old title, Borden's Condensed Milk Company, was the star witness at yesterday's hearing of the Fair Price Milk Committee, of which Health Commissioner Copeland is Chairman. It is believed that the changing of the name of the big concern, which controls the condensed milk and evaporated milk output of the country, is but the first step in a movement for the formation of a gigantic milk combine in this State which will include all the large distributors with the possible exception of the Sheffield concern.

The big distributors, realizing that the situation brought about in this city by the constantly increasing cost of milk is reaching a climax, are undoubtedly getting ready to acquire in plans for a "legalized monopoly" of milk under the control of a State body receiving its powers from the Legislature. The regulation of the price of milk, the same as car fares, gas and electricity, is about to become a realization, many distributors admit. They are therefore preparing for the big event. More than three years ago, when the price of milk began its upward trend, The Evening World predicted that the only solution of the problem would be found in the fixing of the price of that vital food-stuff by a State commission.

Vice President Johnston was cross-examined by Miss Sophie Irene Loeb, of The Evening World staff, who has spent several years in an investigation of every phase of the milk situation. It has been contended by Miss Loeb, from the beginning, that the conversion of fluid milk into condensed and evaporated milk right here in this State and shipping it abroad was one of the chief reasons for high prices.

BORDEN OFFICIALS CAN'T DISCUSS "TRADE" MATTERS.
"How much condensed and evaporated milk does your concern ship to Europe?" asked Miss Loeb.
"I don't know," replied Mr. Johnston. "Anyway, that is a trade matter which I cannot discuss."

"Why can't you discuss it?" persisted Miss Loeb.

"Because this is a New York State situation, whereas we evaporate and condense milk in all parts of the country."
"You have admitted that you annually handle 250,000,000 pounds of milk in this State for condensation and evaporation," went on Miss Loeb. "You admit that practically all of this milk is evaporated in the Spring when milk is most plentiful. In other words, you store up these millions of pounds of milk in immense glass tanks when the fluid is most abundant and you either wait until the fall when the price of milk is higher and sell it at a very great

profit here or ship it to Europe at a perhaps greater profit?"

"We admit that we gather the milk when it is most plentiful," said the witness.

"How much does each of these glass tanks containing stored milk contain?" asked Miss Loeb.

"About 50,000 pounds,"

"How many are there in this State?"

"I couldn't tell you."

"If you didn't gather this immense supply of 250,000,000 pounds of fine fresh milk—gather it to sell it at fancy prices in the fall—wouldn't it have to follow the line of least resistance and flow down into the tenements where there are children starving for lack of it?" pursued Miss Loeb.

"New York City gets all the milk it wants," replied the Vice President of the Borden Company. "We evaporate and condense the milk in the Spring, when there isn't a big enough market for it."

PINNED DOWN, JOHNSTON MAKES AN ADMISSION.

"Do you mean to tell me, Mr. Johnston, that the people of the New York tenements, the mothers of the children of the New York City tenements, would not buy that 250,000,000 extra pounds of milk if it was sold to them cheaply enough? In other words, isn't it true that a poor woman with several small children would buy more milk if it was cheaper and very plentiful?"

Mr. Johnston, Vice President of the Borden Company, with its 250,000,000 pounds of milk impounded in immense glass tanks, admitted that this was possibly true.

Miss Loeb then proceeded to question Mr. Johnston concerning prices paid in the Spring for the milk that is evaporated and condensed.

She wanted Mr. Johnston to take 100 pounds of milk as a specimen and trace it from this evaporating plant to the grocery store and thereby show the actual profit at each step.

"All that I can give you is the cost

per hundred pounds and the market price of the milk," replied Mr. Johnston. "Certainly, you can't expect us to furnish you with the details of our operations."

Mr. Johnston was willing to admit that the process was not a secret. He said a case of condensed milk sold for \$3.50. Each case contains 48 cans. The actual cost of the milk in the case, as figured by District Attorney Martin, of the Bronx, was but \$4, showing a profit of \$4.50. Mr. Johnston contended, however, that the cost of sugar per case was about \$1.70.

"But you'll admit, won't you," asked Miss Loeb, "that despite the high cost of sugar, condensed and evaporated milk is far more profitable than loose milk?"

CONSUMER HIT NO MATTER WHICH WAY HE TURNS.
It also developed that the cost of condensed milk was advanced with the price of loose milk despite the fact that the condensed milk was prepared many months before the loose milk went up. So the consumer was hit no matter which way he turned.

A few minutes before this fact was made clear to the investigators, Mr. Johnston, in answer to a question by Miss Loeb, if the milk was stored in the Spring because the big milk dealers were conservationists and philanthropists, Mr. Johnston replied:

"But it is for the best interests of the consuming public that the milk is condensed."

"Are you talking of the consumers among the poor of New York City or those in Europe who pay high prices for your canned goods?"

"I never heard of a scarcity of milk in New York City when we make

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members of the committee insist that all such information be submitted.

ST. LOUIS REPUBLIC QUILTS.

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